

Serial No. 09/993,175

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1-19 (Cancelled)

20. (Previously Amended) A flexible arm for holding a medical instrument, comprising:
a plurality of links each having a hole therethrough and a proximal surface and a distal surface;

an elongate element extending through the holes, wherein tensioning the elongate element locks the plurality of links in a fixed orientation; and

a screen positioned between an adjacent proximal surface and distal surface of the at least a pair of the plurality of links, the screen sized to enhance frictional engagement over a substantial area of the adjacent proximal surface and distal surface of the at least a pair of the plurality of links when the elongate element is tensioned.

21. (Previously Amended) The flexible arm of claim 49, wherein the frictional element is a screen.

22. (Previously Amended) The flexible arm of claim 20, wherein the screen is not attached to the links.

23. (Previously Amended) The flexible arm of claim 20, wherein the screen is attached to one of the links.

24. (Previously Amended) A device for holding a medical instrument, comprising:

an arm having a plurality of links;

a flexible element extending through the plurality of links;

a body; and

a base link having a proximal end and a distal end, and being aligned with the body on the proximal end along a first axis and being aligned with one of the plurality of links on the distal end along a second axis, wherein the second axis forms an angle with the first axis of between 45 and 90 degrees.

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25. (Previously Amended) The device of claim 24, wherein the angle is approximately 70 degrees.

26. (Original) The device of claim 24, further comprising:
a spring biasing the base link toward an unlocked position.

27. (Original) The device of claim 24, wherein:
the base link directs the elongate element to a position which is at least 0.30 inch offset from the axis.

28. (Original) The device of claim 24, wherein:
the base link directs the elongate element to a position which is at least 0.50 inch offset from the axis.

29-48 (Cancelled)

49. (Previously Added) A flexible arm for holding a medical instrument, comprising:
a plurality of links each having a hole therethrough;
an elongate element extending through the holes, wherein tensioning the elongate element locks the plurality of links in a fixed orientation; and
a frictional element disposed about the elongate element and between adjacent links, the frictional element enhancing frictional engagement between adjacent links when the elongate element is tensioned, wherein the frictional element is not connected to either of the adjacent links.

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50. (Previously Added) A device for holding a medical instrument, comprising:

a body;

an arm having a plurality of links;

a base link disposed between the body and the flexible arm;

a flexible element extending through the plurality of links and the base link; and

a tensioning device movable between at least a first position and a second position,

the first position tensioning the plurality of links to lock the plurality of links in a fixed position, the second position permitting the plurality of links to move relative to one another;

wherein the base link has a proximal end and a distal end, and the base link is aligned with the body at the proximal end along a first axis and is aligned with one of the plurality of links at the distal end along a second axis, and the second axis forms an angle with the first axis of between 45 and 90 degrees.

51. (Previously Added) The device of claim 50, wherein the base link is pivotable relative to the body about the first axis.

52. (Previously Added) The device of claim 50, wherein the base link is curved.